

east lake sammamish trail

november 1999

environmental
process 

Environmental Process Begins

The environmental review process for the East Lake Sammamish Trail begins November 4, 1999 with the publication of the scoping notice in local newspapers. The scoping notice, a copy of which is being mailed directly to you, invites comment on the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement and encourages public participation in a scoping meeting. This newsletter is the first in a series that will regularly update the community on the status of the environmental review process and announce important opportunities for public involvement.

An East Lake Sammamish Trail along former Burlington Northern railroad right-of-way just east of the Lake Sammamish shoreline was first proposed in the King County Urban Trails Plan in 1971. Seventeen years later, in September 1998, King County purchased the corridor from the Land Conservancy of Seattle and King County. The King County Council asked that an "Interim Use Plan" be prepared to identify impacts of and mitigation for the new use.

As existing conditions of the corridor and citizen concerns were identified and analyzed, it became clear to King County that the interim use plan should really be a resource protection and management plan that considers interim use. This is because regardless of the final location or timing of the permanent trail, measures needed to be taken to protect the corridor, its natural resources, and the adjacent private properties. Through a planning and public participation process that assembled environmental data and revealed a broad spectrum of opinion, the Draft East Lake Sammamish Trail Interim Use and Resource Protection Plan (Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan) was drafted and distributed for public review.

An environmental checklist was prepared for the Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan and submitted to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Coordinator in King County Department of Construction and Facility Management. Public comment on the Plan was also directed to the SEPA Coordinator, and a Determination of Significance for the Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan has now been issued.

Please join us at the East Lake Sammamish Trail Public Scoping Meeting

Help identify issues for consideration and evaluation in the environmental review process.

November 17, 1999

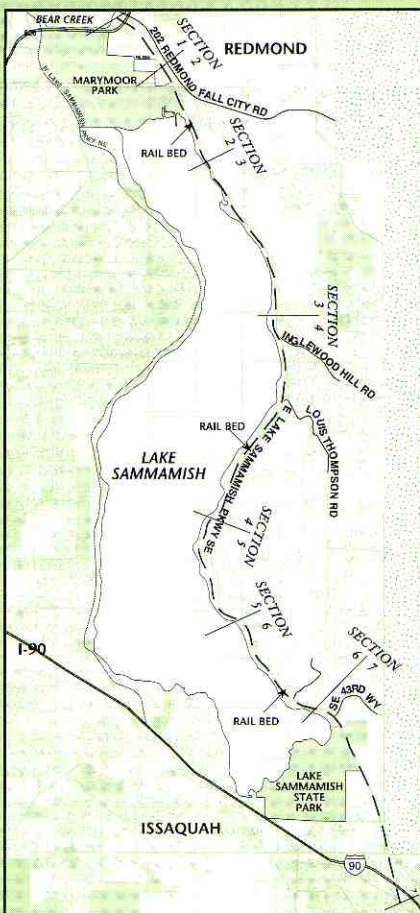
Open house format, drop in anytime

5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Ingelwood Junior High School

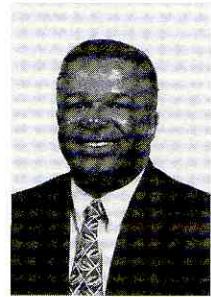
24120 NE 8th

Redmond, WA 98053





**King County Executive
RON SIMS**



Dear King County Resident:

As King County becomes increasingly urbanized, the need grows for an integrated regional system of trails for our citizens to recreate and enjoy the natural beauty of our area. That which we appreciate, we will also protect.

The issues surrounding the public use of the former Burlington Northern rail bed along East Lake Sammamish are complex. I have been reviewing with great interest the voluminous input we have received from the public on these issues. We heard tremendous citizen enthusiasm for the development of this regional trail. We also heard concerns about the potential impacts any interim use of the Trail may have on neighbors' privacy, trail users' safety and the natural environment.

I have therefore directed the Department of Construction and Facilities Management (DCFM) staff to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the East Lake Sammamish Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan and to ensure that we have a thorough public process with extensive public input. I have also directed DCFM to begin immediately the master planning process, and its associated environmental review, for the permanent Trail.

I will transmit the Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan to the King County Council in the summer of 2000 after the EIS has been completed. Although the EIS process is not ordinarily conducted for interim uses, this project is unique. We need to understand the environmental impacts of even interim trail use given the complexity and the amount of time it will take for the final trail to be completed. As land stewards and administrators of complex environmental regulations, King County has an obligation to set the standard for environmentally responsible development.

The approach we have undertaken is guided by a thorough consideration of technical feasibility, environmental goals, long and short term costs, and the concerns of adjacent property owners and trail users. Conducting an environmental review on both the Interim Plan and the Trail Master Plan, expanding the public process, and beginning the Master Plan now, are the most responsible actions we can take for this important regional amenity.

I thank you sincerely for your thoughtful consideration of the complex issues associated with interim trail use. I look forward to working with all of the County's citizens as we meet this challenge together.

Sincerely,

**Ron Sims
King County Executive**

KING COUNTY COURTHOUSE 516 THIRD AVENUE, ROOM 400 SEATTLE, WA 98104-3271
(206) 296-4040 296-0194 FAX 296-0200 TDD E-mail: ron.sims@metrokc.gov

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A Phased Approach

The East Lake Sammamish Trail Master Plan is being developed in phases. The environmental review process reflects the phased nature of the master planning process, and is similarly being prepared using phased review. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) notes that phased environmental review “assists agencies and the public to focus on issues that are ready for decision and exclude from consideration issues already decided or not yet ready.” WAC 197-11-060-(5)(a).

The first phase of the environmental review will be an environmental impact statement, or EIS, for the Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan, while the second phase of environmental review will focus on the comprehensive Trail Master Plan. Throughout project phases, the project team will be actively soliciting public input.

The Phase I EIS will serve to:

- define the project and identify existing conditions,
- examine alternatives, including taking no action,
- identify and analyze potential impacts of the project,
- provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on project impacts,
- identify improvements or strategies to mitigate unavoidable impacts, and
- help decision makers determine the best possible options

The three route alternatives to be considered for interim trail use are the existing rail bed, an alternative corridor that bypasses a portion of the existing rail bed, and the no action alternative. The EIS will also evaluate alternatives for the Resource Protection Plan, including immediate implementation of the plan along the existing rail bed, modified or phased implementation, and the no action alternative. The review will include evaluation of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts for the alternatives, and a discussion of appropriate mitigation measures. The Phase II EIS will evaluate alternatives for the Trail Master Plan, including route alternatives and the no action alternative, and analysis of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts and probable mitigation measures.

The first step in the EIS process will be to conduct scoping. The scoping process is intended to narrow the scope of the EIS to reasonable alternatives and probable impacts and mitigation. It is also used to develop a concise document that focuses on issues of concern to agencies, tribes, and the public. During scoping, interested individuals, agency representatives, and others are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS, including alternatives, anticipated impacts, and mitigation measures. This information will be used to develop the scope of the EIS, including elements of the environment to be analyzed, evaluation methodologies to be used, level of detail, and other factors.

The 21 day scoping period for the Phase I EIS on the Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan begins November 4, 1999 and will include a public scoping meeting on November 17 at Inglewood Junior High School from 5:00 – 8:00 pm. At that meeting, the public is encouraged to help identify issues for consideration and environmental evaluation in the Phase I EIS.

The issues raised in the scoping process will be analyzed as part of the evaluation of the proposed alternatives. Where significant impacts are identified, the draft EIS will include a mitigation program that identifies improvements and actions to lessen or avoid impacts where possible. A draft EIS will then be issued, helping inform the public and agencies on options available before a decision is made on the preferred alternative. The document will be available for public review and comment following its release. The project team will provide responses to comments in a final EIS, which will be published in Summer 2000.

During this time, work will begin on the Trail Master

Plan, including the development of alternatives. Public involvement in the development of alternatives for the Trail Master Plan will be actively sought through workshops and meetings. When alternatives have been defined, roughly

anticipated to be in Spring 2000, scoping for the second phase of environmental review will begin. The draft EIS for the Master Plan will likely be released for review and comment later in 2000. A final Phase II EIS, that includes responses to comments, will then be issued prior to making a decision on the Master Plan.

The Department of Construction and Facility Management (DCFM) will administer the SEPA process, master planning, design, permits and ultimate construction of the trail and its amenities. Cheryl Fambles is the

Director of DCFM. The Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) will continue to participate on the East Lake Sammamish Trail Master Plan team, coordinating review among their recreation, maintenance and land management divisions, and providing policy direction. Parks is also responsible for maintenance of the corridor.

The environmental review process reflects the phased nature of the master planning process, and is similarly being prepared using phased review.

PHASE I Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan Environmental Review Process

Fall 1999

- ▷ Phase I EIS Scoping
- ▷ Begin alternatives evaluation and environmental analysis

Winter 2000

- ▷ Complete alternatives evaluation and environmental analysis

Spring 2000

- ▷ Issue Phase I Draft EIS
- ▷ Phase I Draft EIS comment period and public hearing
- ▷ Prepare Phase I Final EIS and interim use/resource protection recommendations

PHASE II Master Plan Environmental Review Process

Fall 1999

- ▷ Begin Master Plan
- ▷ Develop vision statement and objectives
- ▷ Begin developing alternatives

Winter 2000

- ▷ Begin alternatives analysis and environmental evaluation
- ▷ Identify additional environmental studies needed

Spring/Summer 2000

- ▷ Phase II EIS Scoping
- ▷ Complete alternatives analysis and environmental review

Fall 2000

- ▷ Issue Phase II Draft EIS
- ▷ Phase II Draft EIS comment period and public hearing

Winter/Spring 2001

- ▷ Prepare Phase II Final EIS
- ▷ Issue Phase II Final EIS and Master Plan recommendation

Trail Q&A

Is an environmental review process being done for both the Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan and the Trail Master Plan?

Yes, an integrated EIS/master planning process will be conducted as a phased environmental review that first considers the interim use and resource protection components and then addresses the Master Plan. The EIS will provide an excellent forum for thoughtful and balanced analysis of trail alternatives. Through an EIS, alternatives and potential impacts can be identified up front, and a comprehensive review and analysis is provided as a foundation for good decision making.

What are the opportunities for public input?

The Public Scoping meeting on November 17 is being held to review and collect comment on the scoping issues and alternatives proposed for the Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan. Subsequent public meetings and workshops will be held throughout the planning process as we work together to envision the permanent trail and the amenity that it can be. Opportunities for public input, such as written and verbal comment, will continue to be available.

How will citizens be able to track what is happening between the two phases of the review?

It can be confusing! Here are some ideas we have to help people distinguish between the two phases. Let us know how they work!

- ▶ We will always preface information and communications with an identifier, either Interim Use/Resource Protection, or Master Plan.
- ▶ We will mail newsletters to inform you of significant milestones and opportunities for participation.
- ▶ Each public forum will provide an opportunity to find out the status of both phases.
- ▶ We will maintain a website that provides updated schedule and current events and issues information.

What is the status of the trail crossing fees?

Effective immediately, one year special use permits for single family homes with essential driveways or utilities that cross the East Lake Sammamish Trail will be issued by King County. An application fee to reimburse departments for time spent reviewing the applications will be required, however no processing or use fees will be assessed during this time. The total expense for the one year permit is estimated at \$100-250. Additional information pertaining to the one year special use permits is available from:

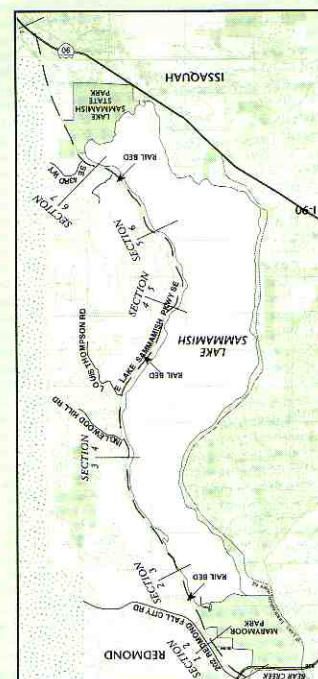
Dave Preugschat
Manager, Property Services Division
King County Administration Building
500 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
specialuse.permits@metrokc.gov

Executive and legislative staff are working together to develop an equitable and legal permanent special use permit process and fee structure for trails of this nature and to prepare implementing legislation. Comments from citizens are welcomed, and should be addressed to Dave Preugschat at the address above.

For details on the phased approach, look inside...

CONTACT Information

ISSUE	PERSON	PHONE NUMBER	E MAIL ADDRESS
<i>Master Plan</i>	Robin Cole	(206) 296-4261	Robin.cole@metrokc.gov
<i>Interim Use/Resource Protection Plan</i>	Robin Cole DCFM	(206) 296-4261	Robin.cole@metrokc.gov
<i>SEPA/Environmental Concerns</i>	Lynn Lewicki DCFM	(206) 205-5633	Lynn.lewicki@metrokc.gov
<i>Trail Crossing Fees and Requirements</i>	Dave Pruegschat, Property Services DCFM	(206) 205-5651	specialuse.permits@metrokc.gov
<i>Illegal Trail Use Emergency</i>	King County Sheriff	911	
<i>Illegal Trail Use Non Emergency</i>	King County Sheriff	(206) 296-3311	
<i>Flooding/Maintenance Problems North of 187th Ave NE</i>	Karl Kostal, King Co. Parks	(206) 296-2962	Karl.kostal@metrokc.gov
<i>Flooding/Maintenance Problems South of 187th Ave NE</i>	Robin Irvine King Co. Parks	(206) 296-4162	Robin.irvine@metrokc.gov



East Lake Sammamish Trail Plan
 Attn: Robin Cole
 King County DCFM
 500 Fourth Avenue, room 320
 Seattle, WA 98104